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TELEGRAM NUMBER 570 OF 27 JUNE

INFO ROUTINE CAPE TOWN, PRETORIA.

SAVING LUSAKA, MAPUTO, GABORONE, LILONGWE, WASHINGTON.

Philip Smith
see overleaf.

A.S.C. 27/6

MY TELNO 567 : AIR FORCE OFFICERS' TRIAL.

SUMMARY.

1. PILE DESCRIBED PRESSURES AND INDUCEMENTS WHICH LED HIM TO 'CONFESS'. DEFENCE HIGHLIGHTED ERRORS IN STATEMENT CONFIRMATION PROCEDURE.

DETAIL.

2. AIR COMMODORE PILE, RECOUNTING THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO HIS 'CONFESSION', SAID HE WAS THREATENED WITH INDEFINITE DETENTION, DRIVEN HOODED IN A CAR, TOLD THAT HIS CO-ACCUSED HAD MADE STATEMENTS IMPLICATING HIM AND THAT HE WOULD BE

DETENTION, DRIVEN HOODED IN A CAR, TOLD THAT HIS CO-ACCUSED HAD MADE STATEMENTS IMPLICATING HIM AND THAT HE WOULD BE ALLOWED TO RETURN HOME AND SEE A LAWYER ONCE HIS STATEMENT WAS CONFIRMED. HE SAID HE AGONISED, BUT FINALLY DECIDED NOT TO PREVENT CONFIRMATION IE BY SUGGESTING UNDUE PRESSURE, AS THIS SEEMED A 'MAGIC FORMULA' TO GET HIM OUT OF HIS PREDICAMENT.

3. THE DEFENCE COUNSEL POINTED UP CERTAIN APPARENT ERRORS IN THE CONFIRMATION PROCEDURE.

COMMENT.

4. THE DEFENCE CONSIDER THAT THE TRIAL (LIKELY TO CONTINUE FOR ANOTHER TWO OR THREE WEEKS) IS GOING WELL. THEY DESCRIBE IT AS A MASSIVE 'FISHING EXPEDITION' BY THE PROSECUTION, WHO APART FROM THE 'CONFESSIONS' HAVE LITTLE EVIDENCE AS SUCH. NEVERTHELESS THEY SAY THAT THE PROSECUTION HAVE SO FAR PLAYED COMPLETELY FAIR. THEY AGREE THAT SOME OF THE EVIDENCE GIVEN BY WEIR AND LLOYD APPEARED SLIGHTLY DAMAGING, BUT DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THIS WILL AFFECT THE OUTCOME, WHICH THEY STILL EXPECT TO BE AN ACQUITTAL OF ALL DEFENDANTS. EVIDENCE OF TORTURE IS LIKELY TO BE A MAJOR FEATURE THIS WEEK: DR PATRIKIOS, THE DOCTOR WHO FIRST EXAMINED THE OFFICERS AND WHO SUBSEQUENTLY LEFT ZIMBABWE FOLLOWING AN UNRELATED SCANDAL INVOLVING MEDICAL ETHICS, IS RETURNING FROM SOUTH AFRICA TO TESTIFY.

FCO PASS SAVING LUSAKA, MAPUTO. LILONGWE, GABORONE, WASHINGTON.

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